

Practicing Pronunciation through Proverbs

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Practicing pronunciation can be very tedious. Proverbs, however, will give fun. For example, when practicing "a", students will prefer reading "No pains, no gains" to some monotonous sentences such as "He looks pale today."

Sentences with several words involving the same sound are good materials for practicing that sound. Many proverbs contain the rhetorical devices related to sound such as alliteration, rhyme and repetition, and thus very suitable for pronunciation exercises (For instance: Practice makes perfect. / Where there is a will, there is a way.) Repeating a sound two or more times in a short sentence can give the student a deeper impression, and the euphonic rhythm can keep the boredom away.

The following is a list of proverbs that can be used for pronunciation exercises. Sounds are marked with boldface instead of being represented by phonetic symbols because the American and British symbols are different, and some symbols may be distorted on the internet.

Vowels

- A friend in **need** is a friend **indeed**.
- Every **bullet** has its **billet**.
- A good wife and **health** is a man's best **wealth**. / East and west, home is **best**.
- A drowning man will **catch** at a straw.
- He **laughs** best who **laughs** last.
- He who has an **art** has everywhere a **part**.
- A little **pot** is soon **hot**. / A **spot** is most seen on the finest **cloth**.
- New **lords**, new **laws**. / **Walls** have ears.
- One man beats the **bush**, another man catches the bird.
- Well begun is half **done**.
- **Finders** keepers, **losers** weepers.
- Kind **words** are the music of the **world**. / The **early** bird catches the **worm**.
- **Haste** makes **waste**.
- Little **strokes** fell great **oaks**. / As you **sow** you shall **mow**.
- Good advice is beyond **price**. / **Might** makes **right**.
- An **ounce** of discretion is worth a **pound** of learning.
- No **joy** without **annoy**.
- Constant dripping **wears** away a stone.

Consonants

- Penny wise, **pound** foolish./ **Practice** makes **perfect**.
- There is nothing which has been **bitter** before **being** ripe.
- **Time** and **tide** wait for no man.
- A **bird** in **hand** is worth two in the **wood**. / Every **dog** has his **day**.
- **Care** killed the **cat**.
- A **good** name is better than a **golden** **girdle**.
- **Fair** feathers make **fair** fowls. / Birds of a **feather** flock together.
- Even the weariest **river** winds somewhere safe to sea.
- **Something** is better than **nothing**. / Birds of a **feather** flock together.
- Least said, soonest mended. / More haste, **less** speed.

- A **l**azy youth, a **l**ousy age.
- No **s**un**sh**ine but hath some **sh**adow. / Better be **s**ure than sorry.
- Labor is often the father of **l**eisure.
- Work has bitter root but sweet fruit.
- There is no **r**oyal road to learning.
- It is **h**ard to be **h**igh and **h**umble. / Do on the **h**ills as you would do in the **h**all.
- Everybody has his **m**erits and **f**aults.
- No garden without its **w**eeds.
- Do not count your **ch**ickens before they are **h**atched.
- Every **J**ack has his **J**ill.
- **T**ry before you **t**rust.
- Better be **d**runk than **d**rowned.
- A **m**iss is as good as a **m**ile. / **M**any a little **m**akes a **m**ickle.
- A stitch **i**n time saves **n**ine.
- **S**ee**i**ng is belie**v**ing. / Every**th**ing must have a **b**egin**n**ing.
- **L**ook before you **l**eap. / A cracked **b**ell can never sound well.
- **W**illful waste makes woeful **w**ant. / **W**here there is a **w**ill, there is a **w**ay.

Students could later be asked to interpret the meaning of the proverbs orally or in writing, which will lead the pronunciation activity naturally to a speaking or writing activity.